

January 13, 2014

Dear Representative/Senator,

I am the proud owner of gaited horses and am writing to urge you to co-sponsor crucial legislation that will protect these vulnerable animals from a repugnant training practice called soring, in which unscrupulous trainers deliberately inflict pain on their horses' hooves and legs to exaggerate their high-stepping gait. This is done for no other purpose than to win blue ribbons at horse shows. The **Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act S. 1406/H.R. 1518** will protect the breeds most susceptible to soring practices, Racking, Walking, and Spotted Saddle horses, by ending the failed system of horse industry self-policing, banning the use of devices associated with soring, strengthening penalties, and holding accountable all those involved in this punishing practice. PAST already has broad bipartisan support in both the House and Senate.

Soring is torture. Through the use of caustic chemicals and abusive shoeing techniques that create constant pressure and pain, the horse is forced to perform an unnatural, exaggerated gait known as "the Big Lick." A horse, by nature, is a creature of motion, but sored horses are confined to their stalls 24/7 except for brief periods of training. Because their feet are in constant pain, they are often unable even to stand without being coerced with whips and threats from abusive trainers. Actions like these were shown to the public in a recent ABC *Nightline* exposé of world grand champion trainer named Jackie McConnell, heard on video describing one of the horses in his care as nearly crippled. These horses cannot speak for themselves and deserve our protection.

The PAST Act is endorsed by the nation's leading veterinary organizations: the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Equine Practitioners. The national organization that speaks for horses across the country, the American Horse Council, as well as state horse councils, endorse this legislation. Breed registries from the western American Quarter Horse Association to the society American Saddlebred Association and numerous breed associations and gaited horse groups support this bill, as do the United Professional Horsemen's Association, American equestrian Olympians, and natural horsemanship clinicians.

Although Congress passed the Horse Protection Act in 1970 with the intent of ending the abusive practice of soring, soring continues to be a common practice in the industries that would be affected by this law. 40 years of experience tells us that this abuse will continue unless the law is changed. As a member of the gaited horse community, I urge you to co-sponsor this legislation to fix the gaps in the Horse Protection Act so it can be meaningfully enforced.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alyssa Milano".

Alyssa Milano